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WIGGIN AND DANA LLP			LUKS, JEREMY AUSTIN	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/777,442	Applicant(s) HUMPHRIES ET AL.
	Examiner JEREMY LUKS	Art Unit 2837

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 February 2008.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1,4,5,8,9,11-15,18,19,22,23 and 26-28 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,4,5,8,9,11-15,18,19,22,23 and 26-28 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 4, 5, 18 and 19 objected to because of the following informalities: These claims are currently dependent on canceled claims 3 and 17. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 4, 13 15, 18 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Christensen (5,984,044) in view of Pickett (4,214,411). Christensen teaches a traffic noise barrier wall (Figure 1) comprising: a first vertically-mounted post (12) including a first slot disposed therein (clearly seen in Figure 1), the first slot extending lengthwise along a side of the first post (12) and having a first width; a second vertically-mounted post (12) spaced apart from the first post (12), the second post including a second slot disposed therein (clearly seen in Figure 1), the second slot extending lengthwise along a side of the second post (12) and having a second width; and a first panel assembly (16, 18) extending between the first and second posts (12) and into both said first slot and said second slot (see Figure 1), the first panel assembly (16, 18) including: a sheet (16) of material having top, bottom, and side edges forming a

perimeter of the sheet (Col. 3, Lines 1-4), said sheet (16) having a sheet thickness that is less than said first slot width (See Figures 4 and 4A), and a frame (18) disposed along at least a portion of the perimeter of the sheet (16), wherein side portions of the frame include a base portion (middle portion of #18 arranged along the side edge) disposed along one of the side edges of the sheet (16) and first and second flange portions (portion of #18 perpendicular to and extending from the aforementioned base portion, completing the U-shape of #18) projecting outward from the base portion on opposite sides of the sheet (16) to define and an edge thickness and to capture at least a portion of the side edges of the sheet (16), wherein said base portion and said first and second flanges (18) are formed from a single material (Col. 3, Lines 41-42) and wherein said edge thickness is greater than said sheet thickness and less than said first slot width such that the side portions of the frame (18) are effective for being received within the first and second slots in drop-down fashion (See Figures 1 and 4, 4A); and wherein the sheet has a thickness less than a thickness of the first flange and less than a thickness of the second flange (See Figures 4 and 4A). Christensen fails to teach wherein the sheet has a thickness substantially less than a width of each of the first and second slots; and wherein the sheet is formed from a transparent material. Pickett teaches wherein a sheet (Figure 1-3a, #2) has a thickness substantially less than a width of each of a first (4) and second (5) slots; and wherein a sheet (2) is formed from a transparent material (Col. 2, Lines 59-66). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the apparatus of Christensen, with the apparatus of Pickett to provide a secure structure capable of

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withstanding extreme force conditions (expansion and contraction of the panel) in an acoustically tight manner.

3. Claims 5, 8, 19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Christensen (5,984,044) in view of Pickett (4,214,411), as applied to claims 1 and 15, and further in view of Neumann (6,253,872). Christensen is relied upon for the reasons and disclosures set forth above. Christensen further teaches the outer surfaces of a frame (Figures 1, 4 and 4A; #18) disposed inside a cavity (formed by H-configuration of posts #12). Christensen and Pickett fail to teach wherein an elastomeric gasket is disposed between the outer surfaces of the side portions of the frame and surfaces forming the channel, and wherein an elastomeric gasket covers at least a portion of the side edge of the sheet captured within the channel. Neumann teaches wherein an elastomeric gasket (Figure 2, #5) is disposed between the outer surfaces of the side portions of the frame (ribs #4 could be a frame) and surfaces forming the channel (see channel formed in rails #2), and wherein an elastomeric gasket (5) covers at least a portion of the side edge of the sheet (2) captured within the channel (see channel formed in rails #2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the apparatus of Christensen as modified, with the apparatus of Neumann to increase support for the panel within the cavity. The Examiner also recognizes, as one of ordinary skill in the art, that such a gasket would further dampen sound.

4. Claims 9, 11, 14, 23 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Christensen (5,984,044) in view of Pickett (4,214,411), as applied to

claims 1 and 15, and further in view of Johnson (7,063,184). Christensen and Pickett are relied upon for the reasons and disclosures set forth above. Christensen further teaches wherein the first and second flanges (Figures 1, 4 and 4A, outer portions of #18) are coupled to a surface of the base portion (middle portion of #18). Christensen and Pickett fail to teach wherein the base portion is disposed outside the entire perimeter of the sheet, and the channel formed by the base portion and the first and second flanges capture a portion of each of the top, bottom, and side edges of the sheet; wherein the first and second flanges disposed on each of the top, bottom, and side edges of the sheet are coupled to a surface of the base portion; and wherein the frame extends along the entire perimeter of the sheet and captures at least a portion of each of the top, bottom and side edges of the sheet. Johnson teaches wherein a base portion (Figures 17, 18, #143) is disposed outside the entire perimeter of the sheet (30) (Col. 11, Lines 35-48), and the channel formed by the base portion (143) and the first (141) and second (142) flanges capture a portion of each of the top, bottom, and side edges of the sheet (30); wherein the first (141) and second (142) flanges disposed on each of the top, bottom, and side edges of the sheet (70) are coupled to a surface of the base portion (143); and wherein the frame (60B) extends along the entire perimeter of the sheet (30) and captures at least a portion of each of the top, bottom and side edges of the sheet (30). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the apparatus of Christensen as modified, with the apparatus of Johnson to increase the rigidity of the structure and better protect the sheet member.

5. Claims 12 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Christensen (5,984,044) in view of Pickett (4,214,411) and Johnson (7,063,184), as applied to claims 9 and 23, and further in view of Donnelly (2003/0019170). Christensen, Pickett and Johnson are relied upon for the reasons and disclosures set forth above. Christensen further teaches a second panel assembly (Figure 1, #16') extending between the first and second posts (12). Christensen, Pickett and Johnson fail to teach wherein the frame of the first panel assembly includes at least one of a protrusion and a recess disposed on the base portion for interlocking with the second panel assembly. Donnelly teaches wherein the frame of a first panel assembly (20) includes at least one of a protrusion (40) and a recess (30) disposed on a base portion for interlocking with the second panel assembly (20) (Page 2, [0043]). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the apparatus of Christensen as modified, with the apparatus of Donnelly to interlock adjacent panel members, increasing the overall strength and rigidity of the apparatus.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 4-5, 8-9, 11-15, 18-19, 22, 23 and 26-28 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The Examiner considers the obvious combination of Christensen, Pickett, Neumann, Johnson and Donnelly to teach all of the limitations as claimed by Applicant.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeremy Luks whose telephone number is (571) 272-2707. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:30-6:00, and alternating Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lincoln Donovan can be reached on (571) 272-1988. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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